GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:266
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2007
FOOD COUPONS
Jindal Shri Naveen;Yerrannaidu Shri Kinjarapu

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has introduced Food coupons in some States to check corruption in Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the States thereto;

(c) whether the Government would have to bear additional financial burden as a result of the launch of said scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government proposes to extend the schemes to all the States;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the time by which it is likely to be extended to remaining States;

(g) whether any study has been conducted to check corruption in Public Distribution System; and

(h) if so, the details and outcome thereof and action taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) to (f): No, Sir. The Government of India has not introduced Food Coupons in the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). However, Food Coupons have been introduced in the TPDS by some of the States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Bihar. In this system, counterfoils/ coupons are retained by the Fair Price Shop dealers while issuing TPDS commodities to the beneficiaries. The retained counterfoils/coupons are then deposited with Food & Civil Supplies Department Offices. The Department Staff then verify lifted quantities of ration commodities from Fair Price Shops. This increases accountability and transparency in functioning of Fair Price Shops. Depending upon the success of the scheme, other States/UTs may also like to introduce the system. Expenses incurred on this measure are borne by State Governments.

(g) & (h): Targeted Public Distribution System was evaluated by Programme Evaluation Organization of Planning Commission (PEO) and ORG Marg, New Delhi. Their reports received in March 2005 and September 2005 reported that there were diversion/leakages of foodgrains, inclusion and exclusion errors in identifying targeted beneficiaries and operation of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) was not financially viable.

To overcome these shortcomings, a nine-point action plan was finalized during 2006, which is under implementation by States/UT Governments. A copy of the nine action point Plan is annexed.

Additionally, a revised Citizens` Charter has been issued for adoption and implementation by State/UT Governments for facilitating use by citizens of provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 in relation to functioning of TPDS

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (g) TO (h) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 266 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 13.08.2007 IN THE LOK SABHA

ACTION PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING OF TPDS

(i) Continuous review of the BPL and AAY lists to eliminate bogus ration cards and to ensure coverage of only eligible BPL and Antyodaya families.

(ii) Ensuring leakage-free and diversion-free distribution of PDS commodities, regular inspection by different levels of functionaries, strict action against guilty persons/ agencies.

(iii) Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in PDS operations - PRI representatives on Advisory Committees, running of fair price

shops by Panchayats and effective representation of Panchayati Raj representatives on Vigilance Committees.

(iv) Ensuring transparency in working of PDS, display of BPL and AAY lists by fair price shops, observance of notified timings by fair price shops.

(v) Use of Information Technology, Computerization of TPDS operations, display of fair price shop-wise and district wise allocations of PDS commodities on web-sites for public scrutiny.

(vi) Carryout door-step delivery of PDS commodities to fair price shops.

(vii) Ensuring timely availability of and issuance of foodgrains by fair price shops.

(viii) Creating awareness among public about PDS operations, training Vigilance Committees of intricacies of PDS operations.

(ix) Making fair price shops financially viable entities - allowing them to sell non PDS items etc.